

CALVIN

cause of the pestilence 1 ... A cut-purse shall be punished, but the Lord declares by his prophet Amos . . . 'Famine is come upon my people of Israel, O ye who devour the poor/ The threats there uttered have been executed against his people.'<sup>17</sup>\* They demand that for his second offence the usurer shall be excommunicated, or that, if such a punishment be thought too severe, he shall at least be required to testify his repentance publicly in church, before being admitted to the sacrament. They remind their fellow-citizens of the fate of Tyre and Sidon, and, momentarily despairing of controlling the money-lender directly, they propose to deprive him of his victims by removing the causes which create them. *Pour tarir les ruisseaux il faut escouper la source.* Men borrow because of "idle-ness, foolish extravagance, foolish sins, arid law suits." Let censors be established at Geneva as in Republican Rome, to inquire, among rich as well as among poor, how each household earns its livelihood, to see that all children of ten to twelve are taught some useful trade, to put down taverns and litigation, and to "bridle the insatiable avarice of those who are such wretches that they seek to enrich themselves by the necessities of their poor neighbours/'<sup>74</sup>

The Venerable Company advanced their programme, but they were not sanguine that it would be carried

out, and they concluded it by expressing to  
the City  
Fathers the pious hope, not wholly free  
from irony<sub>1</sub>  
that " none of your honourable fellowship  
may be  
found spotted with such vices." Their  
apprehensions  
were justified. The Council of Geneva  
endured many  
things at the hands of its preachers, till, on  
the death of  
Beza, it brought them to heel. But there  
were limits  
to its patience, and it was in the field of  
business ethics  
that they were most quickly reached\* It  
did not  
venture to question the right of the clergy  
to be heard  
on matters of commerce and finance. The  
pulpit was  
press and platform in one ; ministers had  
the public